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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, September 7, 1932. ¹¹²³

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Clothing Hints." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. O. A.

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My grandmother used to say that cornmeal was a household jack of all trades, because it had so many uses around the house. It was useful in the kitchen for corn muffins, spoon bread, Johnny cake and all those hundred and one other good cornmeal dishes. And it was also useful in the sewing room and wardrobe for cleaning. Yes, cornmeal was one of those homely old-time dry cleaning materials, used since early days, to clean light colored and wool fabrics. Today we are still using it to clean our light felt hats, our knitted suits or the baby's little delicate wool sweaters. You see, if the meal is spread over a garment and rubbed in, it absorbs the dirt--that is, if the garment isn't too soiled. Then, when you brush off the meal, the dirt goes with it.

My Next-Door Neighbor has a light-blue, soft wool knitted sports suit. It's one of her most becoming outfits. But it soils very easily. So she gives it a cornmeal bath every now and then. Here's the way she proceeds with that bath. She puts the garment in a big bag, shakes a generous amount of cornmeal in on top of it, draws up the bag and shakes it thoroughly so that meal will reach every inch of the garment. Then she takes the suit out and rubs the more soiled spots with her hands, using some fresh meal. That's all there is to it, except shaking the meal off.

This is a good way to dry clean any light, soft wool clothes. Of course, the meal would show against dark colors.

Speaking of using kitchen materials for cleaning clothes, one of my friends told me the other day that she uses a regular kitchen mixture for cleaning her light felt hat. She mixes one part cornmeal and one part each of salt and flour. In this mixture she rubs into the felt, lets it stand all night and brushes it off in the morning.

Of course, if the hat has some very soiled spots, they may not come out with this kitchen-mixture bath. They may need a little special treatment. Those art gum erasers the children use at school are often just the thing for the purpose. The soft rubber will erase the dirt on your hat just as it does the pencil marks on paper. Then, sometimes, soiled spots will come off nicely if you apply a home-made paste. Mix some dry cleaning solvent with powdered French chalk or magnesia or some other white absorbent. Spread the paste over the spot, leave it until it dries thoroughly, and then brush it off.

As for the water spots on your hat, those rings left by the thunder shower hat caught you without an umbrella, you can take those off by rubbing the felt gently with very fine sandpaper.

Now that we're started on the subject of clothes, we might just as well take a little extra time and discuss some of the questions you've been asking me.

Somebody asks how to keep white silk from turning yellow with use. I'll let the clothing specialists reply. They say that heat and sunshine are two things that yellow silk. Strong soap is another. So wash your white silk frock in a thick suds of mild soap, but have the suds cool or lukewarm. Rinse the dress thoroughly in water of the same temperature. Every bit of soap needs to come out to save the fabric. Use a very little bluing in the final rinse water. Now roll the dress up in towels until it is dry enough to iron.

What's that? Hang it out in the sun? Oh, dear, no. Keep it out of the sun and when you iron it, use a warm but never a hot iron.

I heard a lady complaining the other day that her clothes never laster long, that they soon got out of shape and lost their good looks. She couldn't imagine why. But I can, can't you? The way you treat your clothes when you take them off makes all the difference in the way they last and look. Of course, most of us know that when a dress comes off, it should go on a hanger right away. And most of us know that dresses which are hung by one sleeve on a sharp hook tell their own story of neglect. But did you ever consider that the size of the hanger has a lot to do with the way the garment looks? The hanger ought to be the right width for the shoulders. Too wide a hanger makes unsightly bulges in the upper sleeves. Too small a hanger lets the shoulders of the garment sag.

Wooden hangers are inexpensive and generally of a good shape to hold clothes, but those that are painted or smoothly varnished are generally safer than the plain wood. Splintery wooden hangers, you know, may catch silk or other delicate fabrics. You can pad wooden hangers by covering them first with cotton batting and then with a muslin cover. Such a padding helps to lengthen the arms of the hanger for broad-shouldered people and makes the ends less sharp so they won't leave a mark. Also it keeps silk dresses from slipping.

Another simple device to keep dresses from slipping off hangers is to wind a rubber band around each end of the hanger.

That's enough about clothes today. I've got a menu for you that I want to talk about. The main dish for this family dinner is one of those inexpensive meat dishes that is popular with housewives from coast to coast. In fact, I think almost any housewife anywhere in the country would tell you off-hand that she knows exactly how to make meat loaf, that she's made it any number of times. But some meat loaves I've tasted are dry and hard. And some are very greasy. And some don't have much flavor.

And so I asked the Recipe Lady just what the secret of good meat loaf is. When I say a good meat loaf I mean the kind that holds its shape, yet is tender, slightly juicy and full of flavor. The Recipe Lady said she had experimented with many types of meat loaf. For example, she tried out both the molded loaf and the loaf that is packed in a bread tin. The molded loaf always came out best. Here's the way you fix a molded meat loaf. You lay a paper on a rack in an open roasting pan, and mold the loaf with your hands. Then bake it in a moderate oven for an hour and a quarter. No, the pan is not covered. No, you don't add any water to the pan. As the fat in the mixture cooks out, it drips away from the meat and leaves the loaf brown, tender and delicious in flavor with that good baked or roasted taste. On the other hand, a loaf made in a bread tin and baked like bread is likely to be greasy and the meat has a "stewed" taste because the fat and juice settles around the edges and bottom of the pan. Of course, you want enough fat

to season the meat mixture. Too little fat in a loaf makes it dry and lacking in flavor. But you don't want this fat to settle around the outside of the loaf.

Then, another point the Recipe Lady makes about meat loaf has to do with the binder to use. She advises such a binder as bread crumbs or white sauce or perhaps a cereal food instead of egg. Egg coagulates at a high temperature and tends to separate rather than bind the bits of meat together.

As for the seasoning, meat loaf needs a blend of flavors, so you use a number of seasonings, none of them too strong to cover up the meat flavor. You can also use several different kinds of meat for your loaf. Beef, veal and pork drippings give a combination meat flavor that is very good.

Meat loaf is good served either hot or cold. If you serve it hot, tomato sauce or brown parsley sauce is delicious with it.

Well, here's our menu. Meat loaf with brown sauce or gravy; Buttered carrots; stuffed cymblings. By the way, you know that cymblings are those light green summer squashes with scalloped edges. They're sometimes called patty pan squashes. Stuffed cymblings, then; Crusty hot rolls, and baked pears served with ginger sauce.

I have the recipe for stuffed cymblings here. The directions are for stuffing one large squash but you can use them for fixing small or individual cymblings also

You'll need five ingredients:

- 1 large cymbling
- 4 strips of bacon cut in small pieces.
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 green pepper chopped
- 2 and 1/2 cups of bread crumbs, and
- Salt and Pepper.

I'll repeat those ingredients. (Repeat)

Wash the cymbling and scoop out the pulp from the center with a spoon, being careful not to break the outer skin. Cook the cymbling shell until it is tender in boiling salted water and lift it out carefully. In the meantime, cook the bacon or salt pork until crisp, add the onion and green pepper and the cymbling pulp. Cook for a few minutes. Now mix in one and a half cups of the breadcrumbs and season with salt and pepper. Fill the hot shell with this mixture and cover the top with the rest of the bread crumbs buttered. Bake in a moderate oven for about 30 minutes. Serve whole in the baking dish.

Tomorrow; we'll talk about making our old clothes new.

